



The President's Daily Brief

29 October 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

29 October 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Israelis shot down three Egyptian helicopters southeast of Suez city early this morning, according to Jerusalem radio. Otherwise, quiet continued along most of the Syrian and Suez fronts yesterday. Lead elements of the UN supply column reached the Egyptian Third Army carrying food, water, and medicine to the isolated troops. [REDACTED]

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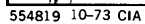
With France taking the lead, our NATO allies were strongly critical Friday of the alleged US failure to consult and inform NATO adequately about Middle East initiatives. (Page 3)

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Notes on [REDACTED] Soviet [REDACTED] and a clash on the Afghan-Iranian border appear on Page 4.

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Lead elements of the UN supply column reached the Egyptian Third Army east of the Suez Canal late yesterday carrying food, water, and medicine to the isolated troops. The agreement between Israeli and Egyptian officers calls for the Israelis to allow a column of 100 trucks, driven by UN drivers, to supply the Egyptians on a one-time only basis. The Israelis are permitting the trucks to proceed in groups of ten despite objections from UN officials who saw no reason to impose a limit on the number of trucks traveling together.

Israel is not permitting the evacuation of wounded until Cairo provides information on Israeli prisoners held by Egypt. Defense Minister Dayan told the press yesterday that International Red Cross representatives have not been given the names of Israeli prisoners in either Egypt or Syria or been allowed to visit them.

The Israelis shot down three Egyptian helicopters southeast of Suez city early this morning, according to Jerusalem radio. These flights may have been an Egyptian effort to resupply or reinforce the Third Army. The Israelis intend to control all access to the army.

Otherwise, quiet continued along most of the Syrian and Suez fronts yesterday. Only scattered small arms and artillery fire in the southern canal area interrupted the cease-fire, and UN observers intervened to stop these outbreaks. The Israelis, who refused two earlier requests, finally permitted UN observers to enter Suez city yesterday--an indication that they now control the city.

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The Soviet sealift continued yesterday with two new ships en route to Arab ports, bringing the total to 29 since October 7. One of these is probably headed for Latakia; the other appears destined for Alexandria.

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Growing criticism of the US in the Cairo press has not been matched by increased friendly treatment of the USSR. The US Interests Section in Cairo notes that during the past three weeks, the press has not mentioned Soviet advisers in Egypt and has accorded little space to Soviet sea and airlifts. Editorial commentary has expressed no thanks to the Soviets. Aside from Soviet unpopularity in Egypt as a reason for the playing down of Moscow's role, the Cairo leadership presumably wants to take as much credit as possible for Egypt's military successes.

* * *

Ghana and Senegal broke relations with Israel over the weekend bringing to 15 the number of African nations that have done so since the outbreak of the Middle East fighting.

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NATO

With France taking the lead, our NATO allies were strongly critical on Friday of the alleged US failure to consult and inform NATO adequately about Middle East initiatives. The allies see consultation as vital because they have been asked to support US actions and to undertake parallel actions of their own in the form of representations to Moscow. The issue assumes particular urgency in the allied view because the US alert affected forces stationed in the NATO area and could therefore have had military consequences for all alliance members.

Several of the allies--notably the Dutch and the British--expressed understanding for the special problems of the US. There was, nevertheless, widespread support for the thesis that consultations are a necessary prerequisite for the kind of solidarity requested by Washington.

The French raised the question of whether the US would, in a time of crisis, "seek a closer consultation with the Soviet Union than with its allies." Several alliance members joined France in calling for discussion of a "code of action" with respect to crises outside the treaty area.

The prestigious newspaper Le Monde is overly bleak in predicting that the crisis has dealt a "fatal blow" to the Year of Europe and a revitalization of the Atlantic Community, but the Middle East crisis has exacerbated US-NATO differences over trade, monetary reform, defense burden sharing, security, and the course of detente. On top of that, the Europeans have had to face up to their own inability to influence a situation that threatens their energy supplies and their stake in East-West detente.

The strain between the US and the Europeans may result in a stiffening of resistance to US desires on a number of pending issues. The French have already suggested that US actions during the crisis have called into question the on-going work on a new Atlantic declaration that would emphasize the value of consultation.

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Afghanistan-Iran: Border guards clashed along the Afghan-Iranian southern border on October 25. Negotiations began almost immediately, however, in an effort to resolve the incident swiftly and peacefully.

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